

AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOLS

Fiscal Year 2012

AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Amherst Representatives

Katherine Appy
 Solomon Goldstein-Rose (appointed to open seat until 2012 election)
 Rick Hood
 Lawrence O'Brien (elected 2012)
 Irv Rhodes (until 2012 election)
 Steve Rivkin (resigned before 2012 election)
 Amilcar Shabazz, Vice-Chair (elected 2012)
 Rob Spence

Pelham Representatives

Debbie Gould (until 2012 election)
 Trevor Baptiste (appointed 2012)
 AnneMarie Foley

Leverett Representative

Kip Fonsh, Chair

Shutesbury Representative

Kristen Luschen (until 2012 election)
 Michael DeChiara (appointed 2012)

The Regional School Committee represents the four communities that comprise the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District: Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury. It is responsible for the direction and support of the educational programs for students in Grades 7 through 12 from each of these towns. Committee meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions as prescribed by law, and are held regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month. Opportunity is available at every meeting for public participation.

STUDENTS

The following demographic data is based on official enrollment numbers as of October 1, 2011.

	Amherst Regional Middle School	Amherst Regional High School	District Totals
Grade 7			
Total Enrollment	240	N/A	240
Special Education	44	N/A	44
ELE	5	N/A	5
Free/Reduced Lunch	65	N/A	65
Grade 8			
Total Enrollment	222	N/A	222
Special Education	59	N/A	59
ELE	6	N/A	6
Free/Reduced Lunch	60	N/A	60
Grade 9			
Total Enrollment	N/A	273	273
Special Education	N/A	50	50
ELE	N/A	11	11
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	71	71

	Amherst Regional Middle School	Amherst Regional High School	District Totals
Grade 10			
Total Enrollment	N/A	253	253
Special Education	N/A	42	42
ELE	N/A	10	10
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	61	61
Grade 11			
Total Enrollment	N/A	284	284
Special Education	N/A	60	60
ELE	N/A	5	5
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	62	62
Grade 12			
Total Enrollment	N/A	274	274
Special Education	N/A	55	55
ELE	N/A	4	4
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	66	66
TOTALS			
Total Enrollment	462	1084	1546
Special Education	103 / 22%	207 / 19%	310 / 20%
ELE	11 / 2%	30 / 3%	41 / 3%
Free/Reduced Lunch	125 / 27%	260 / 24%	385 / 25%

Enrollments on October 1 over the last ten years were as follows:

2002-2003—2,037	2007-2008—1,817
2003-2004—2,043	2008-2009—1,764
2004-2005—1,949	2009-2010—1,691
2005-2006—1,924	2010-2011—1,592
2006-2007—1,877	2011-2012—1,546

In addition, 41 Regional students were enrolled in Vocational Schools as of October 1, 2010. Twenty-one students attended other school districts under the state's School Choice Program, and 67 students were enrolled at charter schools. Tuition for district students to attend these schools is paid by the Regional School District.

Of the 246 graduates in the class of 2012, 176 were Amherst residents.

2011-2012 HIGHLIGHTS

The core mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools is to “provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society.” This informs everything we do as educators, and during 2011-2012, a number of steps were taken toward that lofty goal:

- The Districts’ partnership with the University of Massachusetts, created in FY 11, moved forward with its intensive, systems-level work focusing on the instructional core. District-level and site-level instructional leadership teams worked in collaboration with teacher teams to examine student achievement and improve outcomes for students at all levels. Instructional Rounds, which provide a process for observation, data gathering, and analysis of instruction to inform district and school decision making, have begun at all levels.
- The district formalized the use of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model for student support and intervention. The universal screening tool is moving the district forward in our data-based decision making efforts and provides teachers access to real-time student data to inform instruction, target intervention, and monitor progress. Significant progress was made in implementing a tiered intervention program which provides multi-leveled instruction in our classrooms.
- The School-Wide Positive Behavior System model, which was piloted with great success at Crocker Farm School during the last school year, became a district-wide, proactive systems approach to improving social and academic competency for all students. All schools are engaged in a three-year implementation process. Dr. Rebecca Woodland and Dr. Sarah Whitcomb from the UMass Department of Education have worked extensively with the district in implementation of PBIS and expansion of teacher collaboration.
- The district’s strong partnership with Amherst College continued to grow and strengthen under the direction of the new Amherst College President, Dr. Biddy Martin. The college extended their funding for the district Volunteer Coordinator position held by Kimberly Stender and expanded their support of the schools by underwriting the funding to hire a Director of Teaching and Learning.
- The Central Office administrative team structure was realigned in 2011-2012 to better support the systemic work that is currently underway. This has included reassignment of some responsibilities: 1) The Office of Teaching and Learning now had two Directors, each with essential, distinct focuses and 2) Student Services was redesigned to provide the structures and supports necessary to focus on the districts’ commitment to equity for all students.
 - o Dr. Rhonda Cohen, who previously held the position of Assistant Superintendent for two high performing school districts, joined the district in the role of Director of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Cohen brings experience leading systemic reform efforts that focus on improving mathematics and science instruction, balanced literacy, and the teaching of social studies. Dr. Cohen’s primary responsibility is to focus on curriculum alignment with state and national standards and to ensure alignment within and among schools and levels. At the core of this work is a commitment to equity—to ensure all students have access to a high quality, aligned, rigorous and rich curriculum.

- o Dr. Marta Guevara took on the role of Director of Achievement and Equity. Her work includes ensuring equity of opportunity for all students, handling civil rights issues, and overseeing ELE services for the district.
- o Beth Graham served the Districts as the Director of Professional Development, Collaboration and Teacher Evaluation. Ms. Graham oversaw professional development for faculty and staff in terms of mentoring/induction, content and pedagogy, collaborative teacher teams, using data to inform instruction, and teacher supervision and evaluation. Ms. Graham took a leadership role in developing and implementing the new teacher evaluation model based on the new state standards.
- In addition to restructuring the roles of the administrative team, the physical office spaces were redesigned to make our work more efficient. Human Resources and the Business Office have office spaces side-by-side to facilitate their essential collaboration. All aspects of the Districts' educational operations are now housed in one office suite that includes the Superintendent's office, the Office of Teaching and Learning, Student Services, the Office of Achievement and Equity, and Information Systems. All of the necessary remodeling of spaces and moving of materials was done by the Districts' in-house maintenance and facilities team.
- The Department of Maintenance and Facilities completed a number of large renovation projects across the Districts. These included installation of new flooring at Wildwood, renovation of the South Amherst Campus building to accommodate the new South East Campus School, and the Amherst Regional Middle School windows project.
- The districts once again partnered with families, friends, community members, and organizations to provide income-eligible students with backpacks filled with school supplies for the start of the school year. More than 300 backpacks were distributed.

Initiatives in 2012-2013

- The district has formalized the use of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model for student support and intervention. Our implementation of a universal screening tool is moving the district forward in our data-based decision making efforts and provides teachers access to real-time student data to inform instruction, target intervention, and monitor progress. Significant progress has been made in implementing a tiered intervention program which provides multi-leveled instruction in our classrooms. We are making decisions with a higher level of knowledge about students than we were able to previously. In addition, a team of Central Office staff members have been trained in Harvard University's [Data Wise](#) Program; they will be bringing this system to a wider audience in coming months.
- Amherst College continued their funding for the district Volunteer Coordinator position held by Kimberly Stender, a portion of the salary of Dr. Rhonda Cohen, Director of Teaching and Learning, and expanded their support of the schools by providing \$10,000 for vouchers for the Out-of-School Time partnership.
- School safety has been enhanced significantly by implementation of the camera/buzzer entry system at all schools, new bus protocols for kindergarten students and the addition of comprehensive safety/emergency flip-charts as easy reference materials in each classroom. District personnel routinely review and update safety measures in partnership

with community partners including the Amherst and Pelham Police and Fire Departments, the UMass Police Department, the Amherst College Police Department, the Massachusetts State Police, and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. Information on school safety procedures is available through the ACTV program [*Voices from Our Schools: School Safety Special*](#).

- The district welcomed Dr. Faye Brady, Director of Student Services, who began her work in the district in July 2012. Dr. Brady brings extensive experience and expertise to this role through her work in New Jersey.
- The structure of the Central Office leadership team evolved once again when Beth Graham, Director of Professional Development, Collaboration and Teacher Evaluation, retired in 2011. Michael Morris, former Crocker Farm Principal, was hired to fill the position, which was retooled to address district needs around implementation of the State mandated Educator Evaluation Model for teachers and administrators. Mr. Morris is now the Director of Educator Evaluation and Assessment Analysis and works in partnership with Dr. Rhonda Cohen, Director of Teaching and Learning, in the Office of Teaching and Learning.
 - All staff and administrators were trained before the start of the school year in the new evaluation processes and procedures. Leadership work has been focused on improving the level of feedback that educators receive on their practice to enhance our cycle of inquiry and learning for adults working in the district. The Model has a multi-year role-out, with new elements (such as student surveys and multiple measures of student achievement) to be implemented for the next three years.
- Each of the four towns in the Regional School District appointed members to the Regional School District Planning Board to continue more in-depth research on the impact of various educational regionalization scenarios for their communities. This group has worked tirelessly through various subcommittees to be ready to present a recommendation regarding regionalization to Town Meetings in 2013. On March 9, 2013, the RSDPB voted to move forward with recommending a PreK-Grade 6 Region including the towns of Amherst, Leverett and Pelham. Shutesbury representatives to the Board will continue to participate in the process.
- Our district is comprised of five union groups, four of which have contracts that are being renegotiated in 2013. These groups are as follows: teachers, clerical/media staff, and paraprofessionals which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Education Association; and assistant principals and district administrators, which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Administrators Association. Custodial/maintenance staff members are represented by AFSCME/AFL-CIO and they resolved their union contracts prior to the start of FY 13.
- Dr. Cohen is leading the district in curriculum evaluation, K-12 curriculum alignment and alignment to the Common Core Standards. In 2013, Mathematics is the major area of focus. For a full update on this work, see [Teaching and Learning Update: K-12 Curriculum Alignment](#) on the district website, www.arps.org.
- Dr. Guevara is leading district efforts to assess and improve the work pertaining to family and community engagement with a team comprised of community five-college partners, a school committee member and principals. This team is also leading the work to eliminate barriers to academic success for all students.

- The Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst Pelham Regional Schools are currently engaged in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Coordinated Program Review process. This process involves procedural compliance audits of Special Education, English Learner Education, Civil Rights (MOA), and Title I. Please see the District Improvement Plan on the district website, www.arps.org, for full goal information.

